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MINUTES of the MEETING of PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held VIRTUALLY ONLINE (via Zoom) on 2 July 2020 at 7.00 pm under Local Authorities (Coronavirus) Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings (England) Regulation effective 04.04.2020

Present: Councillor A Barker (Chairman)

Cllrs P Moulton, J Straw, R Woodward and Mrs. A Barker, Ms S Colledge

In Attendance:

Mrs. C Tibbles PSLCC, Parish Manager/Responsible Finance Officer

1 member of the public [Items 2193 only]

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and for the benefit of the attendance register, verbal confirmation was given for the Parish Manager to sign on their behalf.

2191. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2192. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Ms Colledge declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in any planning matter that affected the Green Wedge as a member of Whitwick Action Group and a non-pecuniary interest in Whitwick Historical Group as a member.

Cllr J Straw declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in any planning matter that affected the Green Wedge as a member of Whitwick Action Group and a non-pecuniary interest in Whitwick Historical Group as a member.

Cllr A Barker declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in Walkers Flats Allotment Society as a signatory on some transactions; a non-pecuniary interest in Whitwick Historical Group as a member.

Cllr P Moulton declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in matters regarding the Bowls Club as a member; a non-pecuniary interest in matters affecting Whitwick Historical Group as the Link Councillor and a member; a non-pecuniary interest in matters affecting Whitwick Royal British Legion as the Link Councillor and a member.

2193. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION

The Chairman, having explained that public participation was only allowed during this item and not during the other parts of the meeting, invited questions. A member of the public asked what action, if any, the parish council could take concerning a high increase in visitors using Cademan Woods for mountain biking and bouldering. Some visitors were travelling over 100 miles and expecting parking and facilities that were just not available, causing considerable inconvenience to local residents. The

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Chairman explained this was on the agenda for later consideration and members discussed the excessive number of vehicles that were damaging verges in Turolough Road, families feeling it was unsafe to walk in the woods, climbers accessing areas that were closed and some people arriving with guitars causing local fear of larger scale parties being planned. Residents appreciated this area as a natural woodland and strongly felt it was not a playground. Visitors so far had been approachable when spoken to by parish councillors and residents who had explained their concerns. The Parish Manager had been contacted by British Mountaineering Council who were keen to discuss the concerns of the parish council and explain the purpose of their organisation. If public details were available to the Parish Manager, she would provide personal feedback at a later date.

2194. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2020 be approved and signed as a correct record.

2195. PARISH PROJECTS – WORKING PARTY/LINK COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Resolved: That the following actions be taken/noted:

- a) Playground Working Party Report:** no meetings had taken place during the coronavirus pandemic;
- b) Bowls Link Councillor:** No report.
- c) Allotments Link Councillor – Thornborough Road:** No report.
- d) Allotments Link Councillor – Walkers Flats:** No report.

A member was concerned at the lack of reports again from Link Councillors and hoped that the annual meeting would highlight how important this expectation was to fulfil the role of a Link Councillor effectively.

2196. FUTURE NON-COUNCILLOR MEMBERSHIP

Members noted Ms Colledge and Mrs Barker were willing to be co-opted to the Committee again at the next council Annual Meeting on 16 July.

2197. LAND MATTERS – EXCEPT KGV LAND

It was noted the action list is awaiting updating. **Resolved: That the following actions be taken/noted:**

ALLOTMENTS

- a) that allotments had remained open during the coronavirus pandemic, with guidance being followed as available;
- b) that no matters had been submitted that required attention/action by the Committee;

RECREATION/OPEN SPACES

- c) that open spaces had remained available during the coronavirus pandemic, with thanks to councillors, staff and Rangers for producing and displaying signage, and multiple visits to tape off and padlock equipment to deter access to the play equipment and the outdoor gym equipment;
- d) that severe difficulties and frequent abuse were encountered from some

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- visitors (of all ages) when Rangers, councillors, public and staff were trying to enforce government guidance about play equipment (see also 2199(b));
- e) the Administrative Assistant had emailed more maps and explanatory wording on 27 May to the County Council to supplement the licence application on 30 April (ref 790922) to install new street benches at Hall Lane/Perran Avenue and Loughborough Road;
 - f) the further explanatory letter was now available to encourage some residents to support bench installations but deferred to a future date due to coronavirus pandemic;
 - g) confirmation that 3 new benches have been ordered in readiness for the next licence application in supported locations – delivery date awaited;
 - h) to request meeting with landowner(s) of Cademan Woods which adjoin WPC.019 Car Hill Rock and WPC.017 Swannymote Road to understand what permissions are in place for leisure activities in this popular family walking area; further resolved that reminders be given that Car Hill Rock has not been opened for public use (gates remain locked until safety works are completed) and that the boundary of parish owned land at Swannymote Road be marked by the parish council (in some suitable but simple format); to initiate discussions to reduce parking problems caused by high visitor numbers;**
 - i) Memorial Policy is being drafted by Administrative Assistant to establish procedures for residents to follow e.g. to purchase plaques for benches, donate plants or trees on parish land;
 - j) complaint by resident about a parish tree at WPC.012 (Hilary Crescent) and the Parish Manager had confirmed did not require work when last surveyed but would be checked again on the next scheduled tree survey;
 - k) following councillor scrutiny of parish title deeds and land registry information, that current garden fence boundary WPC.010 being queried by resident at Green Lane should not fall in line with neighbours garden so unless title deeds were supplied to the parish council by the resident (as previously requested) to enable a comparison to take place, the matter was deemed closed;**
 - l) following the reported outcome from the District Council enforcement officer, investigations to be finalised by the Parish Manager of a possible boundary infringement at one open space, with engagement of legal representation if the documents previously requested were not forthcoming;**
- [A 5 minute adjournment took place to allow a new Zoom session to be initiated.]
- m) to approach the County Council and request they accept the donation of a miners' memorial bench from a resident, with the parish council supplying and fitting it as a replacement to the existing LCC bench at the City of Dan; to establish if the shrubs at the base of the wheel could be tidied up and an information board provided under the current licence to expand on the current explanatory plaques;**

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- n) **that JR Landscaping be thanked for their exceptional performance during the lockdown and that the delayed and disrupted summer planting was an exceptional achievement when some councils (understandably) had no floral displays this year;**
- o) progress update by the Parish Manager, reporting that the District Council had now confirmed that erection of a flagpole was permitted development and did not require planning approval; thanks were recorded to local residents who had checked and locked the parish grit bins over the summer period;

2198. BUILDINGS MANAGEMENT

It was noted the action list is awaiting updating. **Resolved: That the following actions be taken/noted:**

- a) that buildings have been closed to public access since 20 March during the coronavirus pandemic, with changing guidance being followed as available;
- b) the Parish Manager thanked staff, JR Landscaping and Whitwick Historical Group for the regular building security checks that continued to be undertaken during this time;
- c) that our insurers (RSA) had confirmed an extended period regarding application of restrictions to unoccupied buildings;
- d) **after considering latest guidance, that 4 site meetings be arranged by the Parish Manager with parties to jointly complete separate risk assessments and begin to plan for phased re-opening of community buildings, with delegated authority remaining with Parish Manager, due to the rapidly changing situation between meetings;** that re-opening of playgrounds has not yet been considered for 6 July opening as government guidance had been questioned with Ministers by the Association of Play Industries; NALC had not responded to the host of measures for owners of playgrounds to consider; that insurance advice would be required if some measures were rejected (like providing adult supervision at each of the 5 playgrounds + skatepark + outdoor gym equipment, cleaning after use by each child, telling adults and children not to lick the poles, operating a booking system for use of swing, roundabout, slide etc.); **to postpone re-opening of playgrounds and outdoor gym equipment until guidance is clarified or potentially revised, that risk assessments take account of current public non-compliance when using closed playgrounds and skatepark, and to consider the known cases of coronavirus in the parish;**

PARK HALL:

- a) **the review by a competent person of the fire risk assessment completed during lockdown was accepted, with 2 signs to be quickly replaced on fire exit doors (NB lost when the door was replaced);**
- b) Notice Board ordered for outside the main entrance door to promote the availability of the Hall and the activities taking place;
- c) **to pursue the search to find a new maintenance company to**

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- service the heating system;**
- d) to pursue a company prepared to undertake periodic electrical inspection;**
- e) no new building repairs and maintenance issues;
- f) no matters raised regarding external areas;
- g) on the advice of the Responsible Finance Officer, to recommend the council approve a virement from contingency budget to offset the huge business rates increase being levied by the District Council on Park Hall – annual charge had increased to £1110.28. Current budget was set at £121 (allowing for 8% increase). One week later this 991% increase was notified;**

COMMUNITY OFFICE:

- h) Fire risk assessment has been reviewed by a competent person during the closedown;
- i) no new building repairs and maintenance issues reported;

PAVILION/TOILETS, OUTBUILDINGS and OLD RAILWAY STATION:

- j) completion of 2 new fire risk assessments had been undertaken by a competent person during the closedown for the Pavilion and the Old Railway Station and would be shared with the relevant committees;**
- k) to establish the solution needed to rectify treatment of damp in the end wall of the station (potentially linked to the chimney);**
- l) to delegate the acceptance of repair quotations to the Parish Manager, with support from the Link Councillor, to resolve these issues which had to be addressed, including the roof leak at the Old Railway Station;**

2199. LAND MATTERS – KING GEORGES V FIELD

It was noted the action list is awaiting updating. **As trustee of the Whitwick Park (King Georges Field) Charity, members resolved that the following actions be taken/noted:**

WHITWICK PARK

- a) that with severe difficulties, the park had remained open during the coronavirus pandemic, with guidance being followed as available which meant the play equipment, skatepark and outdoor gym equipment was closed and not to be used;
- b) that the foul abuse from some visitors (of all ages) directed at Rangers, councillors, public and staff when asking public to not use the equipment after signage and tape had been maliciously removed. Government guidance was clear and there had been frequent reports to the police, with 6 officers attending one incident. Consequently, the council recognised their duty of care to staff as a higher priority and visitors who continued to use equipment would no longer be asked to move; approximately 50 signs had been pulled down so spray signs were now being trialled as an alternative;

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- c) Whitwick Park Improvements Link Councillor – no progress made during lockdown but quotations would be sought;
- d) that the Bowls Green and tennis courts were re-opened on 6 June when guidance signs had been produced, with sports guidance being followed;
- e) that the tree work previously planned for February, then March, cancelled in June, had now been provisionally re-scheduled for the fourth time after a nesting check had been completed;
- f) that due to a hirer being unable to currently use Park Hall, temporary permission would be granted for the business to do fitness activities in the park (within guidelines and no shared equipment) without a fee being charged during the coronavirus pandemic;** this was in line with gestures of support by some other councils;
- g) that a floral NHS tribute design had been planted in the island at Whitwick Park;
- h) limited options for progress on other matters while the Parish Manager has been managing the implications of coronavirus;

PARSONWOOD HILL (part)

- i) no new matters for consideration;

2200. OTHER MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

The Chairman hoped to review what project ideas could be best addressed in future and would provide an update in due course.

Full signature of Chairman: **Date:**

The meeting terminated at 8.19 pm.

Date of the next meeting: Thursday 3 September 2020 at 7 pm